IN THE CLAIMS

The following includes the entire set of pending claims.

Please add Claims 41 and 42.

1. (withdrawn) An apparatus for transplanting a hair graft, comprising:

a housing including an actuator chamber and a hair graft chamber with an open distal end;

a gas-permeable stopper operably coupled to the hair graft chamber;

an aperture through a side of the actuator chamber; and

a vacuum source operably coupled to the aperture to provide suction at the open distal end through the gas-permeable stopper thereby drawing a hair graft into the housing through the open distal end.

2. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising a mesh over the aperture.

3. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising a communicating means coupling the vacuum source and the aperture.

4. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising a control element operably coupled to the vacuum source.

5. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the vacuum source is operably coupled to the actuator chamber for loading a hair graft into a spacing within the hair graft chamber defined by an end of the stopper and the open distal end.

6. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising a gas pump operably coupled to the aperture capable of providing gas flow through the gas-permeable stopper to push a loaded hair graft out of the housing through the open distal end.

7. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising a projection connected to the hair graft chamber, the projection extending in parallel to a central axis of the housing and beyond the open distal end of the housing.

8. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the gas-permeable stopper is formed of braided wires.

9. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the gas-permeable stopper is formed of porous material.

10. (withdrawn) An apparatus for transplanting a hair graft, comprising:

a housing including an actuator chamber and a hair graft chamber with an open distal end;

a gas-permeable stopper operably coupled to the hair graft chamber;

an aperture through a side of the actuator chamber; and

a gas pump operably coupled to the aperture to provide gas flow through the gas-permeable stopper thereby pushing a hair graft out of the housing through the open distal end.

11. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 10, wherein the gas-permeable stopper is formed of braided wires.

12. (withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 10, wherein the gas-permeable stopper is formed of porous material.

13. (previously presented) An apparatus for transplanting a hair graft, comprising:

a housing including an actuator chamber and a hair graft chamber with an open distal end, the hair graft chamber for housing a loaded hair graft;

a vacuum source operably coupled to the housing to provide suction at the open distal end for drawing a hair graft into the hair graft chamber through the open distal end;

a gas-permeable rod inside the housing, an end of the rod being movable to a position along a central axis of the housing; and

an actuator to move the end of the rod substantially flush with the open distal end so that the loaded hair graft is delivered to a scalp wound.

14. (original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the vacuum source is operably coupled to the actuator chamber for loading a hair graft into a spacing within the hair graft chamber defined by an end of the rod and the open distal end.

15. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 13, further comprising means for communicating with a side aperture in the actuator chamber for creating a vacuum within the hair graft chamber.

16. (original) The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the means for communicating includes a control element which applies or releases vacuum to the hair graft chamber.

17. (original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the end of the rod is movable between a first position and a second position, wherein, with the end of the rod in the first position, the housing provides a spacing between the end of the rod and the open distal end of the housing to receive a hair graft, and wherein, with the end of the rod in the second position, the end of the rod is substantially flush with the open distal end of the housing, so that the hair graft is delivered to a scalp wound.

18. (original) The apparatus of Claim 17, wherein the actuator includes a plunger connected to the rod, the plunger being able to move the end of the rod to the first position from the second position or to the second position from the first position.

19. (original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the actuator includes a piston inside the actuator chamber.

20. (original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the actuator includes a plunger connected to the piston.

21. (original) The apparatus of Claim 13, wherein the actuator includes a biasing spring operably coupled to the piston.

22. (original) The apparatus of Claim 21, wherein the biasing spring is operative to move the end of the rod to the first position from the second position.

23. (original) The apparatus of Claim 13, further comprising a projection connected to the hair graft chamber, the projection extending in parallel to the central axis and beyond the open distal end of the housing.

24. (original) The apparatus of Claim 13, further comprising a projection connected to the end of the rod, the projection extending in parallel to the central axis and beyond the end of the rod.

25. (withdrawn) A method for transplanting a hair graft, comprising:

providing a housing having an open distal end;

providing a spacing between an end of a gas-permeable structure and the open distal end of the housing; and

providing vacuum on an interior side of the gas-permeable structure thereby drawing a hair graft into the spacing through the open distal end of the housing.

26. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 25, further comprising:

providing gas flow through the gas-permeable structure toward the distal end of the housing thereby pushing a loaded hair graft out of the spacing through the open distal end of the housing.

27. (withdrawn) A method for transplanting a hair graft, comprising:

providing a housing having an open distal end;

providing a gas-permeable rod inside the housing, an end of the rod being movable between a first position and a second position along a central axis of the housing;

providing a spacing between the end of the rod and the open distal end of the housing;

providing a vacuum inside the housing to load a hair graft into the spacing; and

moving the end of the rod substantially flush with the open distal end of the housing thereby moving the hair graft out of the spacing and into a scalp wound without the open distal end of the housing penetrating the scalp wound.

28. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 27, further comprising moving the hair graft out of the spacing and into a scalp without the end of the rod penetrating the scalp wound.

29. (withdrawn) The method of Claim 27, further comprising aligning the hair graft with a direction of the scalp wound prior to moving the hair graft out of the spacing.

30. (previously presented) An apparatus for transplanting a hair graft, comprising:

a housing including a hair graft chamber with an open distal end, the hair graft chamber for housing a loaded hair graft;

a vacuum source operably coupled to the housing to provide suction at the open distal end for drawing a hair graft into the hair graft chamber; and

a gas-permeable rod inside the housing, an end of the rod being movable to a position along a central axis of the housing for loading or delivering the hair graft.

31. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 30, wherein the hair graft chamber includes a spacing defined by an end of the rod and the open distal end.

32. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 30, further comprising an actuator operably coupled to the rod.

33. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 32, wherein the end of the rod is movable between a first position and a second position, wherein, with the end of the rod in the first position, the housing provides a spacing between the end of the rod and the open distal end of the housing to receive a hair graft, and wherein, with the end of the rod in the second position, the end of the rod is substantially flush with the open distal end of the housing, so that the hair graft is delivered to a scalp wound.

34. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 33, wherein the actuator includes a plunger connected to the rod, the plunger being able to move the end of the rod to the first position from the second position or to the second position from the first position.

35. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 32, wherein the actuator includes a piston inside an actuator chamber.

36. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 35, wherein the actuator includes a plunger connected to the piston.

37. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 35, wherein the actuator includes a biasing spring operably coupled to the piston.

38. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 37, wherein the biasing spring is operative to move the end of the rod to a first position from a second position.

39. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 30, further comprising a projection connected to the hair graft chamber, the projection extending in parallel to the central axis and beyond the open distal end of the housing.

40. (previously presented) The apparatus of Claim 30, further comprising a projection connected to the end of the rod, the projection extending in parallel to the central axis and beyond the end of the rod.

41. (NEW) An apparatus for implanting a hair follicle which is encased in a fat sack, the apparatus comprising:

a housing having a chamber with a central axis and an open distal end, the chamber also having a geometry for constraining any lateral movement of the fat sack; and

an actuator for applying a force to the fat sack for expelling the fat sack through the open distal end in response to the force.

42. (NEW) An apparatus for transplanting a hair graft encompassed in a fat sack, the apparatus comprising:

a housing including a hair graft chamber with an open distal end, the hair graft chamber being of a diameter to constrain lateral movement therewithin of the fat sack;

an actuator controllably operable to provide pressure in the hair graft chamber for drawing a fat sack into the hair graft chamber or expelling a hair graft from the hair graft chamber, respectively.